

ABSTRACT

A method of forming relief in a surface of a sheet utilizing a forming platen whose relief can readily be changed and an apparatus for forming relief in a surface of a sheet incorporating a platen whose relief can readily be controlled and varied on a real time basis, preferably, with piezoelectric actuators reciprocally driving small pixel elements into the surface of the sheet. The method involves using a first platen which carries an input relief. The first platen is to be urged into contact with a surface of a sheet such that the input relief on the first platen forms an output relief in the surface of the sheet corresponding to the input relief. The method involves contacting a first portion of the sheet with a first portion of the first platen to transfer the relief to the sheet, removing the first portion of the first platen from contact with the first portion of the sheet, changing the input relief on the first portion of the first platen to become different and, subsequently, using the first portion of the first platen to transfer its changed relief to a different portion of the sheet. By repeatedly changing the input relief on the first portion of the first platen and repeatedly applying this input relief to different portions of the sheet, the sheet may have applied over the entirety of its surface a desired output relief representing the input relief from the first platen as changed with time.